

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

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R 310529Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 257

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PK, AF

SUBJECT: PAK VIEWS OF AFGHAN COUP: TWO WEEKS AFTER

SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH MAINTAINING RESERVED PUBLIC ATTITUDE, PAK OFFICIALS PRIVATELY PROFESS CONSIDERABLE CONCERN OVER DAUD'S RETURN TO POWER IN KABUL. MOST EXPECT HIM TO HEAT UP PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE, ALTHOUGH NOT IMMEDIATELY. DAUD COUP WIDELY SEEN HERE AS HAVING BEEN SUPPORTED OR MASTERMINDED BY SOVIETS. EDITORIAL COMMENT RESTRAINED SO FAR BUT HAS INCLUDED WARNINGS AGAINST EXPLOITING, PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

1. WITH DAUD COUP NOW TWO WEEKS OLD, PAKISTANIS ARE STILL MAINTAINING RESERVED PUBLIC ATTITUDE. PRIVATELY, HOWEVER, CONSIDERABLE CONCERN IS BEING EXPRESSED ORWQF
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POSSIBLE IMPACT OF DAUD'S RETURN TO POWER ON PAK/

AFGHAN RELATIONS. IN RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH EMBOFFS, GOP OFFICIALS HAVE TENDED TAKE DIMVIEW OF DAUD'S SINGLING OUT PUSHTANISTAN AS ONLY SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED FOREIGN POLICY QTE PROBLEM UNQTE FACING HIS GOVERNMENT. MOST OF THEM EXPECT THAT HE WILL AT THE LEAST UTILIZE PUSHTUNISTAN TO RALLY DOMESTIC SUPPORT AND DIVERT ATTENTION FROM INTERNAL FAILINGS. MAJORITY, HOWEVER, DOUBT THAT HE WILL SEEK MAJOR CONFRONTATION WITH PAKISTAN IN NEAR FUTURE IF ONLY BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE HE WILL REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE TIME TO SOLIDIFY HIS CONTROL.

2. VIRTUALLY ALL PAK OFFICIALS WITH WHOM WE HAVE DISCUSSED AFGHAN DEVELOPMENTS HAVE PROFESSED TO SEE SOVIET HAND IN DAUD COUP. SOME SUGGEST THAT SOVIETS AT MINIMUM HAD FOREKNOWLEDGE OF COUP AND MUST HAVE GIVEN DUAD AT LEAST TACIT APPROVAL, WHILE OTHER ASSERT THAT WHOLE AFFAIR WAS INTEGRAL PART OF OVERALL INDO-SOVIET CONSPIRACY AGAINST PAKISTAN. ALTHOUGH MOST PAKISTANIS TEND TO SEE DAUD AS DOMINANT FIGURE, A FEW HAVE QUESTIONED WHETHER HE MIGHT NOT BE UNWITTING FRONT MAN FOR YOUNGER ARMY ELEMENT. THUS PAK ARMY COLONEL, IN INFORMAL CHAT WITH POL COUNSELOR, WONDERED ALOUD WHETHER DAUD MIGHT PLAY NAGUIB TO SOME YOUNG COLONEL'S NASSER.

3. PAK CONCERNS OVER DAUD'S RETURN TO POWER ARE ONLY DIMLY REFLECTED IN PRESS, WHICH PRESUMABLY IS STILL UNDER GOP INSTRUCTIONS TO OBSERVE RESTRAINT. INDEPENDENT DAWN IN JULY 24 EDITORIAL WISHED DAUD REGIME WELL AND SAID THAT PAKS WOULD QTE WATCH WITH SYMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING UNQTE DAUD'S EFFORTS TO MODERNIZE HIS COUNTRY. PAPER WARNED, HOWEVER, THAT NEW REGIME MIGHT QTE SUCCUMB TO THE TEMPTATION OF SEEKING TO DIVERT THE PEOPLE FROM THEIR FRUSTRATION BY RAISING ULTRA-NATIONALIST SLOGANS UNQTE IF IT MET WITH DIFFICULTIES. PRO-GOVERNMENT URDU LANGUAGE TAMEER EXPRESSED CONCERN IN JULY 27 EDITORIAL THAT DUAD'S POST-COUP PUBLIC COMMENTS SUGGEST HE COULD BE PLANNING TO PURSUE POLICY OF CONFRONTATION WITH PAKISTAN, URGED HIM TO TURN INSTEAD TOWARD IMPROVING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN AFGHANISTAN.

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4. FRONT PAGE ARTICLE BY QTE SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT, UNHY IN JULY 27 GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PAKISTAN TIMES, DATED-LINED KABUL, REPORTED THAT CORRESPONDENT HAD QUERIED REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLING OF PUSHTU SPEAKERS ON KABUL STREETS IN DAYS FOLLOWING COUP AND HAD FOUND THEM UNCONCERNED WITH PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE AND ALL IN FAVOR OF CLOSER RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN.

5. SAME ISSUE PAK TIMES CARRIED LONG EDITORIAL PAGE COMMENTARY BY VETERAN COMMENTATOR ABDUL MAJID ON AFGHAN COUP. AUTHOR NOTED WITH CONCERN DAUD'S PAST RECORD OF CREATING QTE FIERCEST TENSION UNQTE IN RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN AND EXPRESSED HOPE IT WOULD NOT BE REPEATED. REVIEWING HISTORY OF DEPOSED KING ZAHIR'S EXPERIMENT WITH PARLIAMENTARY REGIME, MAJID ATTRIBUTED ITS FAILURE PARTLY TO LACK OF EDUCATION AND ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE IN COUNTRY AND PARTLY TO KING'S INSISTENCE ON RETAINING GREAT PERSONAL POWER WHICH HE HAD FAILED TO USE EFFECTIVELY. AUTHOR POINTED OUT THAT ALTHOUGH SUCCESSIVE AFGHAN GOVERNMENTS HAD PRESSED PUSHATUNISTAN ISSUE, AFGHANISTAN HAD ITS OWN TROUBLED MINORITIES WHOSE FEELINGS OF SEPARATE IDENTITY MIGHT WELL BE STIRRED BY POLICY OF QTE AGGRESSIVE IRREDENTISM UNQTE AGAINST PAKISTAN; HE WARNED THAT ANY SUCH QTE EXPANSIONIST VENTURE UNQTE COULD REBOUND AGAINST AFGHANISTAN.

6. COMMENT: AS WITH OTHER CASES IN WHICH PAK OFFICIALS PROFESS TO SEE SOVIET MACHINATIONS DIRECTED AGAINST THEM, DIFFICULT TO TELL HOW COMPLETELY PAKS BELIEVE THEIR OWN ASSERTIONS. IN THIS INSTANCE, LITTLE DOUBT THAT MOST PAKS ACTUALLY DO SEE SOVIET HAND IN DAUD'S COUP. AT SAME TIME, SEEMS EQUALLY APPARENT THAT THEY ARE CONSCIOUSLY STRESSING THIS POINT IN TALKS WITH US OFFICIALS IN HOPES OF IMPRESSING USG WITH THEIR NEED FOR MATERIAL SUPPORT. PAKS ARE ALSO, HOWEVER, CAREFULLY AVOIDING OVERLY DIRECT PUBLIC CHARGES AGAINST SOVIET UNION IN LINE WITH BHUTTO POLICY OF SPEAKING SOFTLY ABOUT RUSSIANS NEIGHBORS IN PUBLIC WHILE BE-RATING THEM IN PRIVATE.
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